

## **LEISURE SERVICES AND SUPPLEMENTAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (LSSE)**

Fiscal Year 2008

### LSSE Commission

In FY 08, Monica Wisniewski joined the ranks of the LSSE Commission and together with members; James Patulak, Afranio Torres-Neto, Peter Blier, Vice Chair and Stanley Ziomek, Chair, worked to provide input and oversight for the LSSE Department. Throughout the year an assortment of capital projects, long range planning and budgetary topics were reviewed including the new Kendrick Park project, the LSSE and Conservation Open Space and Recreation Plan, the FY 09 Budget, proposed closure of the War Memorial Pool and reduced aquatics opportunities at the Middle School Pool.

### LSSE Staff

FY 08 was a very difficult time on a staffing level for LSSE. Our long time Operations Manager of 21 years, Laurel Kushi, bid farewell to LSSE in October. Carol Rogers, LSSE's Arts and Education Director, also chose to end her short but successful stay at LSSE and left the Department at the end of March. These staff were not immediately replaced but plans were made to fill these positions at the end of the fiscal year. An important new hire did take place in FY 07, however, and that was the hiring and promotion of veteran seasonal staffer, John Coelho, to the position of Course Superintendent.

### Annual Budget and Program Losses and Gains

Austere budgetary predictions for FY 09 threatened the closure of the War Memorial Pool for the second straight year, however, the LSSE Commission, the Select Board and Town Meeting elected to reorganize the LSSE Department and tackle new fundraising plans rather than close this longtime community resource. The War Memorial Pool and the Groff Park Wading Pool did experience a late start opening at the beginning of FY 08, however. This was due to the late Town Meeting decision to fund the pool the prior year. The War Memorial Swimming Pool opened on July 11 in 2007 and the Groff Wader opened a week later. This late opening and the displacement of numerous traditional community swimming programs accounted for substantially lower outdoor pool attendance records in FY 08.

Aquatics programs overall took a major loss when the Amherst Community Aquatics Center, (Middle School Pool) was shuttered during the months of September through November due to LSSE's inability to pay the Amherst School Department a proposed energy/maintenance fee of \$40,000. A resolution was reached late fall to open the pool in December in return for a compromised \$22,000 fee. This closure unfortunately led to a substantial drop in swimming lesson offerings and these are reflected in the statistics portion of the report. Indoor pool lessons were down 58% or 268 fewer registrations. The drop in swimming lesson registrations was even more dramatic when compared to FY 06. In that year there were 385 fewer swimming lesson registrations compared to FY 08.

On the positive side of programming LSSE staff continued to successfully respond to the challenge of operating the Cherry Hill Golf Course. Spectacular special events, new tournaments, new marketing, concessions improvements, increased and continuing collaborations, etc., all were deployed in a sustained effort to provide a quality facility, stronger programs, and greater revenue. In fact, Cherry Hill's revenue increased by 20% with a net profit of \$56,969.

Cherry Hill saw growth in at least three new tournaments and a bevy of new outings. Collaborations were key to Cherry Hill's success as a Master's graduate level intern from the University of Massachusetts, Department of Plant, Soil and Insect Sciences was recruited to conduct greens analyses, soil testing and provide an Integrated Pest Management Plan. The University also figured in prominently with collaborations with the University's Conference Services for marketing purposes and a continued collaboration with the University's Hospitality and Tourism Department. Fran Johnson's Golf, Inc. joined the proshop to supply goods and special events and PGA professionals, Bob Bontempo and Marissa Kulig conducted clinics, lessons and youth camps.

Notably, in the April 2008 Valley Advocate Reader's Poll, Cherry Hill was voted the 2<sup>nd</sup> Best Golf Course in Western Massachusetts, reconfirming that Cherry Hill is true to its motto of "*A Course for Everyone*." The Women's League, women's clinics, youth clinics and youth camps all strive to send the message that the Cherry Hill Golf Course is meant for everyone.

Clubhouse and general improvements to the course continued to make favorable impressions and strengthen player commitments. Major enhancements to the course included improvements to greens, collars and approaches, improved cutting regiment, reconfigured landscapes, tee box, drainage and bunker improvements and more. A new clubhouse sign was installed and management developed an off season newsletter to keep members apprised of year round activities.

Special Events were a prominent feature at the Cherry Hill Golf Course this past year. The special events began with a salute to Fall with an Oktoberfest celebration which included food, a putting contest and live music compliments of the Amherst Oompah Band. On November 10th a temporary nine-hole disc golf course was arranged to celebrate Disc Golf Day at Cherry Hill. An appreciative crowd of 160 women, men and children participated in a grand day of disc golf further expanding the number of first time users to the course. But the starring role in Cherry Hill's selection of special events went to the February 2008 Winterfest Celebration. Approximately 1,500 participants flowed in and out of the course participating in this first ever event brought together by the Friends of Amherst Recreation, Amherst Leisure Services and the Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce. A myriad of activities including; snow sculpture contests, a chili cook-off, cross country skiing races, the amazing Kardboard Classic sled races, sleigh rides, live music and other events all culminated in a fireworks finale.

#### Capital Projects

The Plum Brook Athletic Fields Project moved to near completion in 2008 with the installment of the recreation area sign and final plantings. Plans were made to open the site in the spring of 2009 in order to provide another season of grass growth in preparation for extensive play.

A proposal to the Community Preservation Committee and Town Meeting was made and approved a \$20,000 request from Leisure Services for due diligence funding. These funds will be used for wetlands delineations, appraisals, surveys and for other expenses that may be incurred in the expectation of purchasing property.

The Groff Park Restrooms were completely rebuilt as a result of the Department of Public works construction efforts and opened to the public in the spring of 2008.

**LSSE Program Statistics**

FY 08

FY 07

**Aquatics**

Outdoor Pools – Lessons	457	573
Outdoor Pools Memberships	118	154
Indoor Pool-Lessons	243	511
Indoor Pool Memberships	85	81
Total	903	1,319

**Sports**

Youth Sports Camps	935	880
Youth Basketball	615	653
Youth Football	62	76
Adult Softball	28 teams	32 teams
Adult Volleyball	4 teams	4 teams
Skiing/Snowboarding	142	144
Ultimate	452	597
Sandlot Programs-Adult	745	741
Sandlot Programs- Youth	0	39
Girls Softball	78	106
Youth Soccer	1,545	1,504
Total	4,606	4,776

**Vacation and Day Camps**

Outdoor Challenge	138	156
Early Adventures	134	201
Adventure Playground	344	414
Vacation Camps	101	89
Prime Time	79	78
Total	796	1,318

**Performing Arts**

Community Theater Tickets	4,629	4,546
Valley Light Opera Tickets	2,396	1,829
Total	7,025	6,375

**Youth Classes**

Instructional	248	288
Visual Arts	176	112
Total	424	400

**Adult Education**

Hobbies	102	66
Health	178	265
Sports	20	12
Performing Arts	170	236
Personal Development	118	350
Visual Arts	103	157
Total	691	1,086

**Special Events**

Halloween	273	176
July 4 <sup>th</sup>	3,000 (rain)	20,000
Winterfest	1,500	0
Disc Golf Day	160	0
Octoberfest	55	0
Total	5,988	20,078
 Pavilion Rentals	 63	 86
 Special Needs Registrants	 73	 80
 Fee Subsidies- Households	 215	 187
Fee Subsidies –Individuals	761	567